

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02

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P R 161520Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7796

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 1187

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, TD, UK

SUBJ: ABDUL MALIK (MICHAEL X) HANGED

REF: LONDON 5183

1. MICHAEL DEFREITAS, BETTER KNOWN AS ABDUL MALIK OR MICHAEL X, WAS HANGED MAY 16 AT THE ROYAL GAOL IN PORT OF SPAIN. THE HANGING CAME AFTER THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN LONDON TURNED DOWN MALIK'S SECOND APPEAL AGAINST THE VERDICT AND SENTENCE IMPOSED DURING HIS 1972 TRIAL FOR MURDER AND AFTER THE MERCY COMMITTEE IN TRINIDAD REFUSED TO RECOMMEND A COMMUTATION OF THE SENTENCE TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

2. MALIK WAS INFORMED LATE MAY 15 THAT ALL LEGAL MEASURES FINALLY EXHAUSTED AND THAT HE WAS TO BE HANGED EARLY TODAY. PLICE TOOK ESPECIALLY HEAVY SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AROUND JAIL IN CASE SOME OF MALIK'S FOREIGN SYMPATHIZERS SHOULD TRY TO STAGE A LAST MINUTE RESCUE BUT THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS. MALIK'S WIFE FLEW TO TRINIDAD SEVERAL DAYS AGO AND HAD SEVERAL PUBLICIZED MEETINGS WITH MALIK, WHO REPORTEDLY STILL BELIEVED UNTIL THE LAST THAT THROUGH SOME MECHANISM HE WOULD RECEIVE A STAY OF EXECUTION.

3. ATTITUDE IN TRINIDAD IS ONE OF RELIEF THAT MALIK HAS FINALLY PAID PENALTY FOR BRUTAL 1972 MURDERS. UNLIKE IMPRESSION IN SOME CIRCLES ABROAD THAT MALIK'S

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SENTENCE WAS POLITICAL, TRINIDADIAN ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY

(INCLUDING SOME WHO ONCE KNEW MAIL QUITE WELL PERSONALLY) FEEL THAT HE HAS PAID A JUST PENALTY FOR A BRUTAL CRIME FOR WHICH HE RECEIVED FAIR AND IMPARTIAL TRIAL. LOCAL NEWSPAPER DID A SERIES OF "MAN IN THE STREET" INTERVIEWS ON WEEK AGO AFTER NEWS RECEIVED OF PRIVY COUNCIL'S REJECTION OF MALIK'S LATEST APPEAL. OF FORTY PERSONS INTERVIEWED, VERDICT WAS UNANIMOUS THAT MALIK EXECUTION SHOULD PROCEED SWIFTLY. STRONG SUB-THEME WAS BITTERNESS AT MALIK FOR BRINGING CALUMNY ON TRINIDAD ABROAD BY MISREPRESENTING TRINIDADIAN JUSTICE AND MALIGNING THE ENTIRE COUNTRY ON TOP OF THE COMMISSION OF THE BRUTAL PERSONAL CRIME FOR WHICH HE WAS CONVICTED.

4. WE FIND NO EVIDENCE HERE TO SUPPORT CLAIMS OF SOME OF MALIK'S OVERSEAS APOLOGISTS THAT EITHER HIS TRIAL, CONVICTION, OR SENTENCE WERE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED OR LACKING IN EVERY JUDICIAL SAFEGUARD. IN FACT HE WAS ACCORDED EVERY LEGAL FACILITY AND HIS EXECUTION WAS STAYED FOR TWO YEARS WHILE VARIOUS APPEALS WERE CONSIDERED, INCLUDING TWO APPEALS TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN LONDON (ONE AN APPEAL OF THE CONVICTION, THE LATTER AN APPEAL OF THE SENTENCE). AT ONE STAGE, MALIK'S DYNAMISM COULD HAVE MADE HIM A POLITICAL FIGURE. THE POTENTIAL WAS ABORDD BY A MORE ELEMENTAL PART OF HIS CHARACTER WHICH LED TO HIS BRUTAL MURDER OF HIS ASSOCIATES, AND THE LONG JOURNEY TO THE HANGMAN. MILLER

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